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★ JAN 18 1929 ★

Wednesday, Jan 23, 1929

Housekeepers' Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "A bib for the Run-About." Program based on article by Ernestine Chubb, Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Material available: "Mimeographed copies of "The Self-Help Bib."

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The sewing machine was whirring busily when I dropped in to see my Next-Door Neighbor.

"Come in," she called, from the sewing room. "Come in, Aunt Sammy, and see what I'm making for my niece. I took her to the nursery school this morning -- and what do you think? Every child in the school was wearing a new kind of bib -- a self-help bib -- like this one."

My Neighbor showed me the bib she was making, of soft green Japanese crepe.

"Do you know, Aunt Sammy," said she, "that even a child's bib is an important part of his education? While I was at the nursery school yesterday I was given an article called 'The Self-Help Bib,' written by Ernestine Chubb, of your Bureau of Home Economics. Here's what Miss Chubb says, about bibs:

"One factor in the child's learning process is repetition. Since the bib must be put on and taken off four or five times a day, it affords and excellent opportunity to develop muscular control in the child's fingers, and corresponding mental progress. A mother may encourage this development, and save time for herself, by providing a garment so simple that even a two-year-old can manipulate it alone.' Does that sound all right to you, Aunt Sammy?"

"Quite all right," I said. "What else does Miss Chubb say, about bibs?"

"She says that the bib manufacturers have not yet made any bibs that are easy for a child to put on and take off. The most common type, which fastens with strings at the back of the neck, is useless, because tying a bow is one of the last activities of this kind that a child learns. Then there's the apron bib, with shoulder straps which cross in the back. This is all right for the child of kindergarten age, but it's too hard for a very young child to manage. A two-year-old would get all tangled up in this kind of a bib, if he tried to manage it himself."

"He surely would," I said, remembering Billy's first efforts to dress himself. "What kind of a bib does Miss Chubb recommend, as being easy for a child to handle?"

"Look at these diagrams," said my Neighbor, handing me a copy of the article. "Here's the simplest type. This bib is made of white ratine (rat-in-ay), bound with colored bias tape. At the neck the tape is extended into 18-inch strings, which are put through eyelets on opposite sides of the neck, and then fastened to small brass rings. Very easy to manipulate. There is no wrong side to the bib, which eliminates one difficulty. The child has only to get both strings over his head, pull on the rings, and presto! the bib is adjusted snugly around his neck. To remove the bib, the child needs only to grasp it at either side of the neck, and pull out and down. This releases the lock, and allows the strings to slip easily, until an opening is made, large enough for the head.

"Another good type of bib, for an older child, is the apron bib, like this diagram. The straps of this bib are tacked, where they cross in the back. They form an opening big enough for the child's head. The straps are just long enough to be brought around and buttoned in the center front. This is the kind I'm making for Jennie June. See -- the ends of the straps are rounded, because square corners would be too hard for Junie to handle. The button is sewed right on the edge of the strap.

"The third type of bib is an allover apron. I must make Junie one of these, next, for they will keep her clothes clean. Won't she look cute, Aunt Sammy, in pretty all-over bibs?"

"Of course she will," I said. "What will you make the bibs of?"

"Something pretty, and comfortable. A soft cotton fabric, such as ratine (rat-in-ay) or Japanese crepe, would be nice. Bibs of such material as these, which are semi-absorbent, can be used as a napkin to wipe the child's face, during and after the meal. Besides, ratine and Japanese crepe are easy to wash, and require no ironing. Such materials as osnaburg, bleached muslin, or linen might also be used, but they require more time in laundering -- and you know how I like to save myself unnecessary work. Now let me read Miss Chubb's concluding paragraph, about bibs:

"Since bibs are such a necessity for small children, and since many are needed, interest and variety may be obtained by introducing color. There are many lovely pastel shades of crepe available. The colored bibs are attractive when bound with white bias tape, or the white materials may be bound with white bias tape, or the white materials may be bound with various colors. A child's play is his work, and it may be made interesting by providing him with clothing and toys that are both attractive and educational."

"Now," said my Neighbor, "you can cut out another bib for Junie. Use this rose-colored crepe, if you don't mind."

I cut out a bib for Jennie June, and bound it with bias tape. When the child came home from nursery school, we tried the bibs on her; she was fascinated with the new game of putting the bibs on, and taking them off.

"See, Aunt Sammy?" said Jennie June. "I can put it on all by myself, and I can button it. It's a pretty bib!"

The child ran into her own room, to admire herself in the low-hanging mirror.

I told you about Jennie June's room, didn't I? Well, that reminds me of something. Just a minute, till I find it -- here it is, tucked in between two recipes -- here's what a Missouri mother has to say about children's rooms:

"Let the children exercise their individual taste in their rooms. With but little expense they can use saw, hammer, nails, and some fresh paint and have wonderful satisfaction. The ten to fifteen-year-old boy can saw off the legs from an old table, to make it just the right size for the smaller children's room, and can construct shelves for his books, also a cabinet for his various collections of birds' nests and eggs. Let him suggest the place for his bat and balls, fishing tackle, etc. If you are successful in getting his viewpoint, he will instinctively ask your advice about the furnishing of his room. Do not forget that he also needs a nook or corner in the garage or basement for his other 'too numerous to mention' articles.

"In the younger children's room try using just a border of one of the attractive papers for children's rooms. Let the children help you make a bookcase from an old box, and a similar arrangement for toys. See that the room has chairs of the right size, even if the children have to saw the legs from some large ones. Tack a wide strip of burlap above the mop board, and encourage the children to keep seasonable pictures cut and pinned up."

Now -- before I go -- here's something which will interest all mothers who have children between the ages of -- well, between the ages when children wear bibs, and bib aprons. The Bureau of Home Economics has had copies of Miss Chubb's article about bibs mimeographed and these copies are free. In the article there are directions for making the three types of bibs recommended, with the pattern diagrams. If you want this information, please write to the Bureau of Home Economics, Washington, D. C., and ask for the article called "The Self-Help Bib," by Ernestine Chubb. That's right-- "The Self-Help Bib," by Ernestine Chubb.

Have we time for a menu? Let's see what we can do, in a hurry. What shall we have, for the main dish? Beef? Pork? Lamb? Let's have fish -- we haven't had fish for some time. How about Creamed Finnan Haddie? And Baked Potatoes go right well with fish, and a green vegetable -- let's say spinach, with vinegar or lemon; of course, if spinach is not available, some other green will do. A little relish, or chili sauce, will pep up the meal. For dessert, let's have something simple -- sliced fruits, and cookies. Most any kind of cookies will be good with sliced fruits. Orange Drop Cookies would be very good. I broadcast the recipe for Orange Drop cookies last spring, so perhaps you have it in your Radio Records.

Now let's collect our menu, and see if it sounds O.K. Creamed Finnan Haddie; Baked Potatoes; Spinach, or some other greens; Chili Sauce; Sliced Fruits and Orange Drop Cookies.

